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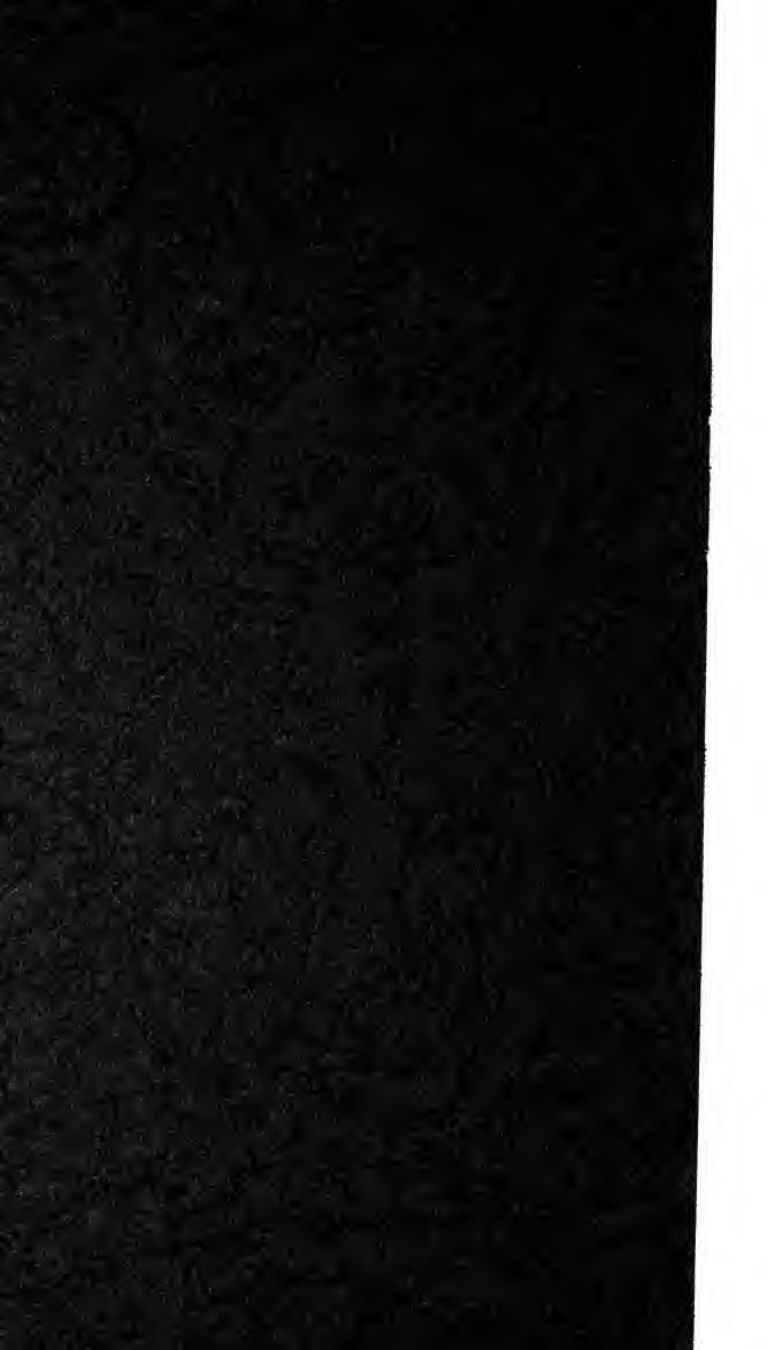
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# BAKER'S EDITION OF PLAYS

## Her Weekly Allowance

Price, 15 Cents



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# HER WEEKLY ALLOWANCE

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A Farcical Entertainment in One Act

BY

JESSIE A. KELLEY

AUTHOR OF "THE PEDLERS' PARADE," "SQUIRE JUDKIN'S APPLE BEE," "MISS  
PRIM'S KINDERGARTEN," "THE VILLAGE POST-OFFICE," ETC.

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BOSTON  
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

# HER WEEKLY ALLOWANCE

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## CHARACTERS.

MRS. JACK TEBBITTS . . .	<i>Who has an allowance.</i>
CLEANSING FLUID AGENT .	<i>Who helps her economize.</i>
DOROTHY FLETCHER . . .	<i>Who wants a doll (child).</i>
PIANO AGENT . . . . .	<i>Who saves a divorcee.</i>
MRS. FORD . . . . .	<i>Who wants subscriptions.</i>
FRUIT PEDLER . . . . .	<i>Who plays a bunco game.</i>
SPECTACLE AGENT . . . .	<i>Who saves the family's eyesight.</i>
SUSIE PEASE . . . . .	<i>Who sells soap (child).</i>
MRS. KELLOGG . . . . .	<i>Who has tickets to sell.</i>
BOOK AGENT . . . . .	<i>Who cultivates the family's minds.</i>
MRS. BROWN . . . . .	<i>Who is soliciting for a turkey supper.</i>
PATENT MEDICINE PEDLER	<i>Who saves Mrs. Tebbitts' life.</i>
CHAIR PEDLER . . . . .	<i>Who makes the neighbors envious.</i>
BLIND PEDLER . . . . .	<i>Who arouses Mrs. Tebbitts' sympathies.</i>
ARMENIAN WOMAN PEDLER	<i>Who is a fraud.</i>
RUG SELLER . . . . .	<i>Who can sell Mrs. Tebbitts nothing.</i>

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NOTE.—The entertainment may be given on any platform, with or without a curtain. Arrange the stage as an ordinary sitting-room, with table, chairs, couch, etc. As given, it requires five women, two little girls, and nine men, although nearly all of the men's parts can be taken as well by women, if desired.



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F. SCOTT SMITH

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## HER WEEKLY ALLOWANCE

*Changing Third Agent made with  
can bottle of fluid and cloth*

SCENE. — *Of no importance, a mere platform answering perfectly well for this entertainment, so that it bears the few tables, chairs and other properties called for. (See Note on the opposite page.)*

MRS. TEBBITTS *enters as is discovered at rise of curtain.*

*as from killing her husband off. Has basin of water and cloth*

MRS. TEBBITTS. There, now, Jack is off to the office, and I told him to take his dinner downtown so I could have the whole day to clean house. He thought I ought to hire someone to do the cleaning for me, but I'm just sick to death of hired help, and I'll just show him I know how to do it myself, even if I am a young housekeeper; and besides, there's the thirty-five dollars he gave me for the week's expenses, and I want to show him at the end of the week how much I have saved out of it and what a good financier his wife is. I've always wanted to try the allowance plan, and he has always laughed at it; but last night I told him at how much better advantage I could buy, and how much I could save if I had a regular allowance, so he gave me this money and told me to go ahead and try it. Here's my little account book with the pencil attached, and every cent I spend I shall set down at once. People are always laughing at a woman's accounts, but I'll just show Jack that I am an exception. I must get right to work, but first I must put on this big apron and my sweeping-cap. *(Goes to glass to arrange it.)* There, that looks quite coquettish. I read in the paper the other day that there was no need of looking untidy even if one were house-cleaning, and that's just what I think. Let me see; what do you suppose I ought to do first? I notice that

*(Looks about for)*

everything is always upset when folks are cleaning house, so I think the first thing to do is to get everything down and pile it in the middle of the floor. (*Begins piling up and disarranging furniture.*) There, that really looks like house-cleaning, but I wonder what I ought to do next. (*Knock at door.*)

*Enter* CLEANSING FLUID AGENT. *L*

*Mrs. Tebbitts R. F. He goes C.*

*(Takes out box)*

AGENT. Ah, I see I have arrived at just the right time — house-cleaning; just the time you need this wonderful article I have for sale. Will you allow me to demonstrate its wonderful cleansing properties, madam?

MRS. T. I am very busy to-day, as I want to get this house all cleaned before my husband gets home to-night. He's going to take his dinner downtown so I can have the whole day to work.

AGENT. Then I have here just the thing to help you accomplish your purpose. Ordinarily your task would be impossible, but with this to help you it will be but child's play. Here, madam, I see is a rug. Let me show you how quickly a few strokes of this will make it look like new. Give me a little hot water please. (*Mrs. Tebbitts*

*gives water in basin.* AGENT *puts in spoonful of mixture. Takes rug and wipes with cloth.*) Wonderful stuff, madam; this rug is not only cleansed, but new; saves you the expense of several dollars in getting a new one; will clean your last year's gown so it cannot be told from new; cleans anything in the house — from the finest material to the coarsest — without leaving a spot, and also restores the original color to any faded material. The price of this can, enough to last one year, is — I know you will be surprised at the extremely low price — only three dollars, madam.

MRS. T. It seems very nice, but my husband has just begun giving me a weekly allowance, and I don't want to fritter any of it away. I have here my little account book for setting down all my expenditures, and I want to have a snug little balance at the end of the week.

AGENT. Just so, just so. I am indeed glad to find a woman of such unusual business ability, and I am doubly



pleased because I have here just the thing which will enable you to have that snug little sum left at the end of the week. By the use of this you will save all expense of hiring help for your house-cleaning, for every carpet can be very easily cleansed on the floor by simply going over them with a cloth wrung out of this mixture, and, as I said before, it will also make old clothes look like new. It is a great boon to housekeepers, and you will make the mistake of your life, madam, if you do not take a can of it.

MRS. T. I did get a big spot of grease on my blue silk dress, and it faded dreadfully; so I thought I'd have to get a new one. But if this will make it good as new, I suppose it would be economy to buy it. I believe I will take a can. (*Gets pocketbook; pays him three dollars.*)

AGENT. Thank you, madam.

*Exit AGENT.*

MRS. T. Three dollars gone. (*Gets account book and writes.*) That leaves me thirty-two dollars. This isn't doing my house-cleaning; but no matter, it won't take me long now that I have this wonderful preparation. I believe I'll just get that blue silk dress out and go over it with this stuff and make it look like new; then I'll fool Jack when he comes home, make him think I have a new dress, then happily surprise him by telling him it's the old one I've fixed so I won't need a new one. I believe in a wife helping her husband save all she can. I'll get it and fix it right off. I'm dying to see how it will look. (*Goes out and brings in dress.*) It does look pretty faded and dirty, but I guess this will fix it all right. (*Spreads skirt on table, rubs spot vigorously with preparation. Have large white patch basted on skirt.*) I do believe it's taking that grease spot all out. I guess it's just as that agent said—but, oh, dear! it doesn't look as if it were restoring the original color. Why, I believe it has all turned white where I rubbed it! (*Holds up skirt, showing large white patch.*) That man was a regular fraud, and I'd just like to get hold of him. I'm afraid I shan't be able to wear it, after all, and there's three dollars of my allowance gone. I'll have to be very careful of the rest of it. I'm dread-

*Have dress and clothes ready*

*Don't make ready with bottles of the*

*Seems like clothes table*

*Takes dress off*

fully tired. I've been working so hard all the morning I believe I'll sit down and rest a few minutes and look over the new fashion book. The talks to young housekeepers always say it is much better to rest a few minutes several times a day, and you will feel so refreshed that you can more than make up the time. (*Sits down; begins reading.*  
*Knock at door.*)

*Enter CHILD with extracts. Comes L. of table*

DOROTHY. Hello, Mis' Tebbitts. Won't you buy some extracts off of me? If I sell a dozen bottles I can get a big doll that will open and shut its eyes, and say "mamma" if you push hard on her chest.

MRS. T. How many bottles have you sold, Dorothy?

DOR. I've only sold one, and I've tried most ev'ry house on the street, and I do want that doll awful.

MRS. T. That's too bad. How much is the extract a bottle?

DOR. It's only thirty-five cents a bottle, but the man says it's worth fifty.

MRS. T. I suppose I might take some. It will keep, and it is always handy to have plenty of those things in the house. I believe in buying in large quantities. What flavors have you?

DOR. They're all lemon.

MRS. T. Oh, dear, I don't believe Jack likes lemon very well, but perhaps he will learn to. I will take the eleven bottles, Dorothy, and you can get your doll. (*Counts out three dollars and eighty-five cents.*)

DOR. Ma said you were easy, and she guessed I could work you all right; but I didn't s'pose you were quite so easy as all that. (*Puts extract on table*)

*Exit DOROTHY*

MRS. T. She didn't seem very grateful; but no matter, it was a good bargain for me. She said they were worth fifty cents; eleven fifties would be five dollars and fifty cents, and I only paid three dollars and eighty-five cents, so I saved — let me see, three eighty-five from five fifty. I'll have to write it down. (*Writes in book, subtracting.*) Five from ten is five, eight from fourteen is six, three from

*Piano Agent ready L. with order book and pencil or*

four is one — one dollar and sixty-five cents saved. That helps out quite a lot on that three dollars I paid for that cleansing stuff, and I won't need any extract for a long time if Jack will only eat things flavored with lemon. I think he will when he knows how cheap I got it and how hard I am trying to save. I *must* go on with my cleaning. (*Bustles around, piling up more things. Knock at door.*) *She down C.*

*Enter PIANO AGENT. Comes C. L. of Mrs. T.*

AGENT. Good morning, madam. Have you a piano in your home?

Mrs. T. No; we've only been housekeeping a little while, and have not felt we could afford a piano, but now my husband has given me a regular allowance and I am going to be so systematic and saving that I expect to save enough to buy one in a few months.

AGENT. That is just where our plan comes in handy. You say you have a regular allowance; now just let me put in one of our highest class pianos which we are selling this week at the unheard-of price of eight hundred dollars as a special inducement to young housekeepers like yourself. You pay me five dollars down and five dollars each time you get your allowance, and before you know it you will have an elegant piano all paid for, and a home made happy for your husband — for what is home without music? When your husband comes home, tired from his day's work, you can play some sweet, old ballads to him. I know you play well by the looks of your little white hands. You have the real musician's hands. I presume you have made music almost a life study.

Mrs. T. Yes; I took a quarter's lessons when I was a young girl, but I am rather out of practice now. I presume it would all come back to me, and I know Jack would enjoy it so much!

AGENT. Just give me your name, your street and number and the first instalment of five dollars, and I'll have the piano up here the first thing in the morning.

Mrs. T. I don't know as I ought to pay out five dollars more just now, but I would like to have that piano if it's such a bargain.

*Mrs Ford ready L. with magazine, order  
book and pencil*

AGENT. It's the opportunity of a lifetime; but not only that, but how many less divorces we would hear of if a wife would soothe her husband with sweet music. You never hear of a divorce where there is music in the home.

MRS. T. Is that so? Well, I do believe I'll have it. I don't want to run any chances of Jack getting tired of me and wanting a divorce, and the piano won't really cost him anything if I pay for it out of my allowance.

AGENT. I'm glad to meet such a wise little woman; I wish there were more like you. Now your name and the street and number.

MRS. T. Mrs. John B. Tebbitts, 101 Main St. (AGENT writes.)

AGENT. Now the five dollars and your piano will be here in the morning. (MRS. TEBBITTS hands him money.) Thank you, madam. Good day.

*Exit AGENT.*

*Back of table.*

MRS. T. (*writing in book*). On account piano, five dollars. Let me see how much I have spent now. Cleansing fluid, \$3, lemon extract, \$3.85, piano, \$5—total, \$11.85; which leaves me (*subtracting*), five from ten is five, eight from nine is one, one from four is three, one from three is two—twenty-three dollars and fifteen cents. (*Knock at door.*)

*Enter MRS. FORD. Comes to table.*

MRS. FORD. Good morning, Mrs. Tebbitts. You're right into house-cleaning, I see. You don't mean to say you do it all yourself, Mrs. Tebbitts?

MRS. T. Yes; I'm going to this year. By going at it the right way it will be very easy and save quite an expense.

MRS. F. I mustn't stay but a minute, then, for I know you are in a hurry to get at it, but perhaps it will do you good to rest a few minutes. You'll be surprised when I tell you my errand. I'm taking subscriptions for this magazine; something I never did before, and of course there's no need of my doing it now, for Mr. Ford always gives me plenty of money for everything I want. But I

was looking at the elegant premiums they give for such a few new subscribers, and I thought this cut-glass dish would look just too sweet for anything in that lovely new mahogany china-closet I have, so I didn't say a word to Tom about it, but I just made up my mind I would start out this morning and ask a few of my dearest friends if they wouldn't like to take the magazine. Of course I know none of them will refuse such a little thing, for it is only three dollars a year; and even if they didn't care anything about the magazine, they would be perfectly willing to give me the three dollars. I'll put your name right down for one, Mrs. Tebbitts. *Shows interest*

Mrs. T. Yes, indeed, Mrs. Ford; of course I am very glad to do such a little favor as that for you. *(Gives Mrs. Ford three dollars; looks sadly at diminishing amount in pocketbook.)*

*Mrs. F. writes in order book*

Mrs. F. It was awfully nice of you to take it, but I mustn't detain you another minute. You must come over and see how lovely that cut glass is when I get it. Do you know, I asked Mrs. Jones, and she was dreadfully rude about it. She said she thought it was just as bad as begging, and I might as well have a little card printed like the beggars and go round poking it under people's noses. But some folks are so mean about little things! She could afford to give me the three dollars just as well as not. Don't work too hard, Mrs. Tebbitts. Good-bye.

*Fruit Pedler ready with basket of apples*

*Exit Mrs. Ford.*

Mrs. T. I didn't want her old magazine a bit, and I did need that three dollars. I just agree with Mrs. Jones that it is downright begging; but she'd never forgive me if I didn't take it, and she's acquainted with all those people I want to get in with, so I just had to give her that three dollars. Let me see *(consults book)*, three from twenty-three fifteen is twenty fifteen — almost half of my week's allowance gone already. I must hurry with my cleaning. *(Wipes a chair or two. Knock at door.)*

*Enter FRUIT PEDLER.*

*Basket ready**(Takes apples in hand)*

FRUIT PEDLER. Madam, can I sell you some very fine apples? Every one of them sound and a fine flavor—the very best apples grown in the country to-day. They are such fancy fruit that they are usually four dollars a bushel, but as this is the last bushel I have left, I will let you have them for two dollars—a great trade, madam.

MRS. T. I believe I do need some apples. My husband is very fond of apple pies. Will these make good pies?

FRUIT PED. Delicious! Can't be beat either for cooking or eating. It's very seldom you get a chance to buy this particular kind of apple; they're scarcer than hen's teeth.

MRS. T. I don't believe I need more than half a bushel.

FRUIT PED. Don't make the mistake of your life, madam. This is no ordinary fruit, and I should have to charge you three dollars for half a bushel, and I will let you have the whole bushel for two dollars.

MRS. T. Well, there's a chance to save a whole dollar, and I guess I need to save it, for my week's allowance is going pretty fast. I'll take the whole bushel.

FRUIT PED. Yes, madam; get me something to put them in. *(Mrs. TEBBITTS gets basket.)* Two dollars, please. *(Waits until he gets money; then standing back to MRS. TEBBITTS empties apples and departs hurriedly.)*

MRS. T. *(examining apples)*. Well, I never! Every one of these apples is rotten—not a sound one among them! I thought he hurried off pretty quick when he got his money. He just had a few of those elegant ones in his hand to show. Guess that was a bunco game, all right, and I'll have two dollars more to deduct from my allowance, leaving only *(consulting book)* eighteen dollars and fifteen cents. If I'm real careful I think I can make that last for the week, but I'm afraid I shan't be able to save much. Oh, dear, it's almost noontime and I haven't accomplished anything. I must hurry now to make up for lost time. *(Frantically begins pushing furniture around.)* I'll polish this chair next with the furniture polish I bought last week. *(Gets bottle and cloth and begins polishing.)* Now I really am getting started at the cleaning. Doesn't that make that chair look nice? It's such a satisfaction to do one's own cleaning, if you do get dreadfully

*4 p.m. 10:30  
polish  
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2 p.m.  
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R.T.  
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tired. I don't believe I shall ever hire it done again. It's real easy when you go at it the right way. (*Knock at door.*)

*Enter AGENT with spectacles.*

AGENT. Do any of your family wear glasses, lady?

MRS. T. No; there are only myself and husband, and we both have excellent eyesight.

AGENT. Perhaps you think you have, lady; but my long years of experience in dealing with the human eye enables me to tell at a glance whether glasses are needed or not, and allow me to tell you, lady, unless you are properly fitted with glasses at once you will be completely blind in six months.

MRS. T. Oh, that would be dreadful! But are you sure of it? Why, my eyes never trouble me, and I never have the headache.

AGENT. Just allow me to prove it to you, lady. Here I will make a mark on this piece of paper, so (*makes an extremely small dot on paper*); hold it up at this distance from you (*goes across stage*); now, lady, can you see the mark I made?

MRS. T. (*hesitating*). No, I'm afraid I can't.

AGENT. Which proves conclusively, without any manner of doubt, that you will be totally blind in a few short months unless you allow me to fit you with these wonderful glasses I am selling.

MRS. T. I suppose I really ought to buy them, but I have spent so much money to-day I don't know as I can.

AGENT. Madam, do not let any false notions of economy deter you from purchasing these glasses. Think of the long years spent in darkness if you neglect your eyes now.

MRS. T. I'm sure Jack would rather have me spend every cent he ever had than be blind. How much do you charge for the glasses?

AGENT. The regular price, lady, is twelve dollars, but as I have a kind heart and am trying to alleviate the sufferings of humanity, I will make the price to you, lady, only three dollars. Goodness is its own reward, and although I shall be losing instead of gaining money by the

transaction, it will be a pleasure to me to think that I have saved those beautiful eyes.

MRS. T. How very kind of you! It is a pleasure in this sordid world to meet a person who thinks more of the good done to humanity than of mere dollars and cents.

AGENT. Are you sure your husband's eyes are good?

MRS. T. Yes; I heard him say only the other day that he had unusually good eyesight—better than any of his companions.

AGENT. Indeed, I am sorry to hear it, for that is always the case—unusually good eyesight, then sudden darkness. How many times I have seen just such occurrences in my experience! Madam, I should feel very much worried about your husband's eyes if I were in your place. How old a man is he?

MRS. T. He will be thirty-two next June.

AGENT. Yes, just as I thought; just the age, the dangerous, perilous age, the age when a man's eyesight is apt to leave him in a second; and with the symptoms that you tell me your husband has—unusually good eyesight—I should indeed feel alarmed.

MRS. T. Do you think anything could be done to prevent the trouble?

AGENT. Undoubtedly, undoubtedly. With a pair of these glasses put on immediately there would be no danger whatever of his eyes not remaining good indefinitely; and feeling great sympathy for you in your trouble, I will let you have this pair for your husband even cheaper than your own. For the small sum of one dollar and fifty cents you may save your husband's eyesight.

MRS. T. I must take them if it takes the last cent I have. How thankful Jack will be when I tell him from what an awful fate I have saved him! (*Counts out four and one-half dollars and pays* AGENT.) Here is your money, and I feel very grateful to you for your kind interest in myself and husband. *She takes spectacles.*

AGENT (*aside*). She's the easiest mark I have struck for a long time. (*Aloud.*) As I said before, lady, virtue is its own reward, and I consider it a special providence that I stepped in here to-day. Good day, madam.

*Exit* AGENT.



MRS. T. I must put these glasses right on. (*Puts on glasses.*) I cannot help thinking how fortunate it was for myself and Jack that he came, even if it did still further lower the allowance. Let me see (*consults book*); eighteen dollars and fifteen cents I had before he came, and I paid him four dollars and a half; that leaves (*reckoning*) thirteen dollars and sixty-five cents. Oh, dear, how money does go, and time, too! Let me think; what was I doing? Oh, yes; polishing this chair. (*Goes at it again.*) What had I better do next? I believe I'll finish that little centre-piece I was making for the table. Of course I'll want to have that ready to put on when I get the room cleaned, and there are only a few more stitches to take in it. (*Takes sewing and sits down.*) Why, I can't see a thing with these glasses, and they make my eyes ache frightfully! I believe I'll ask Jack about them before I wear them any longer. (*Takes them off.*) It's real restful to sit down a few minutes. I believe I'm feeling rather tired doing so much house-cleaning in one day. (*Knock at door.*)

*Enter* SUSIE PEASE.

*Mrs. Kellogg ready with tickets*

How do you do, Susie? Why aren't you in school this morning?

SUSIE. Mother let me stay out this morning so's I could sell some soap. She's cleaning house (guess you are too by the looks), and she said she hated to clean house and not have anything new, and she read in the paper that Parker's, out in Chicago, would give a beautiful chair if you sell ten dollars' worth of soap; so she's sending me round to the neighbors to see if they'll buy some. The chair is awful pretty in the picture. How much will you take, Mrs. Tebbitts?

MRS. T. I suppose I will need quite a lot of soap for house-cleaning, and I do like to please a child. I'll take a dollar's worth, Susie. (*Gives dollar.*)

SUSIE. You're an awful nice lady. I'll put the order down and bring it to you as soon as it gets here.

*Exit* SUSIE.

MRS. T. (*consulting book*). Thirteen sixty-five less one is twelve sixty-five. I hope no one else will come to-day with anything to sell. I shan't buy another thing of anyone. (*Knock at door.*)

*Enter* MRS. KELLOGG.

MRS. KELLOGG. I'm so glad to find you at home, dear Mrs. Tebbitts. You're house-cleaning, aren't you? You will pardon my coming so early in the day, but I have these tickets to sell for the charity benefit, and I know how interested you always are in anything pertaining to charitable work. I said to my husband last night, "I am sure Mrs. Tebbitts will buy at least four of these tickets, because they are only fifty cents apiece, and if there are only herself and her husband in the family, she can give the other two to some of her friends; or if they can't go at all they can surely find four of their friends who would like to go." So I brought over four, and of course if you want more I shall be glad to sell them to you.

MRS. T. (*aside*). I wish I had moral courage enough to say I wouldn't take her old tickets, but I haven't. (*Aloud.*) Yes, Mrs. Kellogg; of course I shall be delighted to help the good cause along. You can always depend on me to help in the charitable work. I think four will be sufficient. That will be two dollars. (*Pays.*)

MRS. K. It is such a pleasure to ask one who gives as cheerfully as you do. Some people seem to buy them so grudgingly. I must run along now, for I have a number more to sell. Good-bye, dear; come over and see me soon.

*Book Agent ready with book.*  
*Exit* MRS. KELLOGG.

MRS. T. "The Lord loves a cheerful giver," I know, but I must say I didn't give that very cheerfully when I realized it left only ten dollars and sixty-five cents in my pocketbook. Oh, dear! I don't believe I like an allowance so well, after all. I'm getting rather discouraged; but perhaps it will come out all right. (*Knock at door.*) I just dread to hear a knock at that door. It makes the cold shivers go all over me. (*Opens door.*)

*Enter BOOK AGENT.*

BOOK AGENT. I have here, lady, something which should be in every home—a complete set of the immortal bard Shakespeare's works. Just look this volume over, lady (*hands her book*); see how beautifully it is bound; notice the excellent quality of paper, the good type, the notes at the bottom of each page.

MRS. T. It looks very good, but I cannot afford to buy any books at present.

BOOK AGENT. Madam, you cannot afford not to buy them. How many times do I see charming, intellectual, cultured young ladies like yourself who after marriage lose all interest in the higher things of life and degenerate into mere household drudges, while their husbands continue to grow intellectually until the time comes when the man is ashamed of his wife and she is kept entirely in the background. How much better, I say, if husband and wife together, under the cosy light of the evening lamp, should read such inspiring words as those of the Bard of Avon. Take, for example, such passages as these: "To be or not to be, that is the question." (*Gives Hamlet's soliloquy in tragical manner with ridiculous gestures.*) Who is not the wiser and better for having read such noble words? Madam, I repeat, you cannot afford not to buy them.

MRS. T. I always did say before I was married that I should not give up my reading and let my husband surpass me in everything.

BOOK AGENT. I knew, lady, by one look into your highly intellectual face that you would appreciate Shakespeare. At many places I know instantly that to sell them this work would be like casting pearls before swine; but you, with your cultured mind, would read and enjoy.

MRS. T. How much is the set?

BOOK AGENT (*aside*). A little flattery works fine with these women. (*Aloud.*) The price is thirty-five dollars for the twenty-four books complete, but in order that all true lovers of Shakespeare may have a chance to enjoy his works, we are selling the set for two dollars down and two dollars a month until paid. Two dollars a month, fifty cents a week—less than the price of a box of choco-

lates — and still people say they cannot afford to buy them.

MRS. T. I never thought of it that way before. Fifty cents a week is very small. I should never miss it at all. I — believe — I'll — take — the — set. Two dollars down, you said? (*Hands him two dollars.*)

BOOK AGENT. Yes, madam; and our collector will call each week for the fifty cents. Good afternoon.

*Exit* BOOK AGENT.

MRS. T. Two dollars more gone; but it gives such an air of distinction to have a set of Shakespeare in the book-case. I wasn't going to let on to him after he thought I had such an intellectual face that I didn't care a rap about Shakespeare's works. Now he'll tell that horrid Mrs. Fiske, who lives next door and thinks she is so literary, that I have purchased a set of Shakespeare, and perhaps she won't put on so many airs next time I meet her. Think I'll sit down and look them over a few minutes. (*Sits down and turns a few pages.*) Oh, dear! I never could read that trash! I almost forgot to put it down in my book. Ten sixty-five less two is eight sixty-five. Now for some more cleaning. Where was I? Oh, yes, I'll clean this picture and hang it up. (*Begins cleaning picture. Knock at door.*) I wonder who it is now. Come in.

*Enter* MRS. BROWN.

MRS. BROWN. How do you do, Mrs. Tebbitts? I haven't seen you for an age; and how sweet you look with that big apron and that dear little cap!

MRS. T. Oh, I know I look like a fright, but I have been so busy house-cleaning! I've worked until I'm tired enough to drop. Sit down, Mrs. Brown. I'm glad to rest a few minutes.

MRS. B. (*sitting down*). I mustn't stop long. You weren't out to the last sewing circle, were you? We all missed you awfully. You are always such a great help.

MRS. T. I had company that day and couldn't get out. What did they do?

MRS. B. Oh, we sewed a little, then we made plans for a turkey supper, and we're to solicit everything for the tables, so we can make lots of money.

MRS. T. (*aside*). More money!

MRS. B. I am collecting money to buy the turkeys, and you know they are awfully high now.

MRS. T. (*aside*). I suppose I'll have to give something, but I won't give more than fifty cents any way.

MRS. B. Do you know, some of the ladies I have asked have only given fifty cents! Did you ever hear of such meanness? I should think anyone would be ashamed to give less than two dollars at the very least. I know you can always be depended on to give liberally.

MRS. T. (*aside*). I can't get out of it less than two dollars. (*Aloud.*) Here are two dollars, Mrs. Brown; that will help a little. (*gets \$2 from purse*)

MRS. B. Thank you very much, Mrs. Tebbitts. (*Aside.*) I thought sure she'd give five dollars after what I said. (*Aloud.*) We'll have the tickets out next week, and I'll bring some over for you to buy. They are only fifty cents apiece, so I know you will want to buy several. I have got to see all of our church people on the street to-day and report to the Chairman how much I have collected, so I must go right along. Ever so much obliged, Mrs. Tebbitts. Oh, I forgot; I want you to make a cake, too, for the supper. You do make such delicious angel cake! You'll make me a loaf of that, won't you?

MRS. T. Yes, I'll try to do that.

*Exit* MRS. BROWN.

It takes a dozen eggs to make that angel cake, and they are fifty cents a dozen at present. Two dollars for turkey, about sixty cents for cake, besides buying tickets. Well, I must take two dollars more off of my account, leaving me only six dollars and sixty-five cents. That allowance is growing "smaller by degrees and beautifully less." I just won't buy another thing or give another cent to anybody, and perhaps by letting some of my bills run until next week I can get along without letting Jack know how much I have spent. I hadn't finished cleaning that pic-

*Patent Medicine Pedler ready with bottle of medicine*

ture. (*Begins cleaning picture.*) Now I'll hang it up. <sup>hang</sup> Even if I have spent quite a lot of money to-day, I have surely earned a good deal doing all this hard work. Women who come in to clean do charge such dreadful prices and do so little in a day. (*Knock at door.*)

*Enter* PATENT MEDICINE PEDLER. *Brown & Co*

PEDLER. Madam, you are looking very tired and worn out.

MRS. T. I do feel rather tired just now.

PED. Yes, madam, your face shows that you are tired, that you are on the verge of nervous prostration. Your zeal as a housekeeper and homemaker is greater than your strength, and already the lines of age are creeping around your eyes and mouth.

MRS. T. Oh, horrors! do I begin to look old already! (*Looks in glass.*) I believe I'll never try to clean house again.

PED. There is no need of your looking old or of giving up your work if you will only fortify yourself by taking this wonderful elixir. It not only guards against the ravages of time, but in cases of lost youthfulness actually restores it. Madam, by that hectic flush on your cheeks I fear you will fill a premature grave unless you at once take steps to prevent it.

MRS. T. Oh, dear, then Jack will get married again, and the horrid creature will have all my things! I just won't give her a chance, allowance or no allowance. How much is your wonderful medicine, and are you sure it will save my life?

PED. There is no doubt of it whatever, madam. A teaspoonful taken three times a day will work wonders in a very short time, and you will be restored to perfect health and beauty. The price, madam, which is a very small consideration, considering its great curative and restorative properties, is but two dollars a bottle—a mere nothing.

MRS. T. Well, it's a mere something to me when I have only six dollars and sixty-five cents left; but this is a positive necessity, so I will take a bottle. (*Goes to get pocketbook.*)

PED. (*aside*). What gulls these women are! She looks as strong and healthy as they make them. Arousing a little jealousy does great things in selling my goods — a little water, highly colored. They do say folks don't drink enough water, so perhaps it's just what she needs.

MRS. T. Here's the two dollars.

PED. Thank you, madam. Remember, a teaspoonful three times a day; not any more, for it is very powerful stuff.

*Chair Agent with Chair ready.*  
*Exit* MEDICINE PEDLER.

MRS. T. (*writing in book*). Four dollars and sixty-five cents left. But what is money compared with health? I'll take a teaspoonful now and perhaps it will rest me and take some of those old age lines out before Jack gets home and sees them. (*Takes medicine.*) Horrid tasting stuff! But no matter, if it will keep me from growing old. (*Knock at door.*) Did you ever know of so many people coming to a house in one day? Come in, whoever you are.

*Enter* AGENT *with chair.*

AGENT. Just in time, lady. I see you're cleaning house. Now, of course, you will want something new. What's the use of cleaning house if you have nothing new? Nobody knows you've cleaned it. Here's this elegant new style rocker, just right for this corner. Fills in there slick as a whistle. Isn't it a beauty, lady? Ever see anything handsomer? Just examine it; nothing shoddy about it; solid oak; finest quality of tapestry upholstery. Just stand right here, madam, and get the effect. Charming, isn't it?

MRS. T. Yes, it's very pretty, and I'd like to have it. I've always wanted that kind of a chair for that corner; but it's no use talking to me to-day. I've had pedlers here all the morning, and I'm not going to spend another cent; and anyway I haven't money enough left to buy it if I wanted it ever so bad.

AGENT. That's just what that woman who lives next door said. She said your rooms looked rather bare, and what you had was cheap, and you really needed a few good

R12

chairs; but she didn't believe you could afford to buy such a nice one as this. I presume she is watching out of her window now to see if I take it out again.

MRS. T. She is watching out of her window at other folks' affairs most of the time. Said I couldn't afford it, did she? Well, I'd just like to let her see I could afford it (*looks in pocketbook*), but I have only four dollars and sixty-five cents left, and the week's provisions to buy out of that, so it's no use to think of it.

AGENT. I just hate to let that woman see me take this chair out, for I know she'll be right in to tell you how sorry she was you couldn't afford to buy it; so to help you out I am going to break a very strict rule of the company, and I don't know but I will lose my position by doing so. We have strict orders to sell nothing except for spot cash, but I will allow you to keep this chair on payment of only four dollars, and I will come around quietly after dark once a week and collect a few dollars until the total amount of twenty-five dollars is paid, and that woman next door won't know but you paid it all now.

MRS. T. (*hesitating*). I know I ought not to spend the money for it now, but I really do need it very much, and it will just make that woman green with envy. You may leave it, and here's your four dollars.

AGENT. I'll come next Wednesday evening for the next payment.

*Exit* CHAIR AGENT.

MRS. T. (*writing in book*). All gone but sixty-five cents! Whatever shall I tell Jack! Oh, I am so sick of house-cleaning! (*Knock. BLIND MAN gropes his way in.*)

MRS. T. Oh, you poor man! Are you blind?

PED. Yes, kind lady; I have been blind now for ten years. My eyesight had been very good, when all at once the darkness of night fell upon me.

MRS. T. And to think the same thing would have happened to both myself and Jack if that kind-hearted man hadn't come and told me about it this morning. We might even have had to go around selling things like this. I cannot turn you away, though I have very little money left myself. What have you to sell?



PED. (*showing paper and pencils*). I have some excellent paper and some red, black and blue pencils. These blue pencils (*holding up*) are two cents, these red ones (*looking in bag and holding up*) are three cents, and the black ones (*holding up*) are five cents.

MRS. T. But how do you know the color if you can't see anything?

PED. (*aside*). I came pretty near getting caught that time. I must look out. (*Aloud*.) Kind lady, you know the touch of the blind is very sensitive, and by simply touching any of these pencils I can tell the color.

MRS. T. I have always heard the blind had a very sensitive touch. I don't need any paper or pencils, but I feel I must help you a little, so you may give me fifty cents' worth of something. I would give you the money without taking anything, but I have heard that was not a wise thing to do, and I want to show wisdom in my charitable work.

PED. (*handing a few sheets of paper and couple of pencils*). Yes, kind lady; I ask no charity in my misfortune if people will only buy. (*Aside*.) And pay fifty cents for three cents' worth. (*MRS. TEBBITTS gives him fifty cents*.) Bless you, for a kind-hearted lady, and I wish there were more in the world like you. (*Aside*.) That I could work as easy.

*Armenian Woman ready with basket of lace, pins, needles, pure fuller, more*  
Exit BLIND PEDLER.

MRS. T. I wonder what he said as he went out; seemed to be muttering something. Fifteen cents left and nothing in the house for supper! What shall I do? I know; I'll buy a can of salmon and I have a little lettuce and salad dressing; so I can make a salmon salad. (*Knock at door*.)

Enter ARMENIAN WOMAN PEDLER, basket on arm.

ARMENIAN. Oh, lady, please buy! I have sick husband and seven small childers. No bread give them. They starve if you no buy. (*Uncovers basket and holds up various articles*.) Pretty lace, cheap, so cheap, ten cents; pins, needles. Buy, lady, please buy. Just little, get bread, take home.

MRS. T. I can't let this poor creature starve. Here, I have just fifteen cents left; take it and buy your children some bread. I guess we'll have to go hungry ourselves, though.

ARM. Thank; much thank. (*Takes out pocketbook; opens to put in fifteen cents, showing it full.*)

*Exit ARMENIAN WOMAN.*

MRS. T. Why, her pocketbook was full of money! Guess I needed that fifteen cents more than she did, after all. I believe she was a fraud; and we can't even have a salmon salad for supper. (*Knock at door.*) Do you suppose that can be another pedler? Come in.

*Enter MAN with rug over arm.*

PED. Madam, can I sell you a fine rug? Very handsome.

MRS. T. No, you can't sell me anything. There's my pocketbook (*opens it*), and you see there isn't a cent in it, and I had thirty-five dollars this morning; but you pesky pedlers and beggars have got every cent of it.

PED. I'll sell it to you just the same. You look and see if you have any old pants, coats or boots of your husband's and I'll give you a nice rug for them.

MRS. T. No; I've spent every cent I had, but I'm not going to begin selling our clothes. It's no use for you to talk to me; even a worm will turn at last.

PED. You are missing a great opportunity, lady.

MRS. T. Yes; and I wish I had missed a good many more of them to-day.

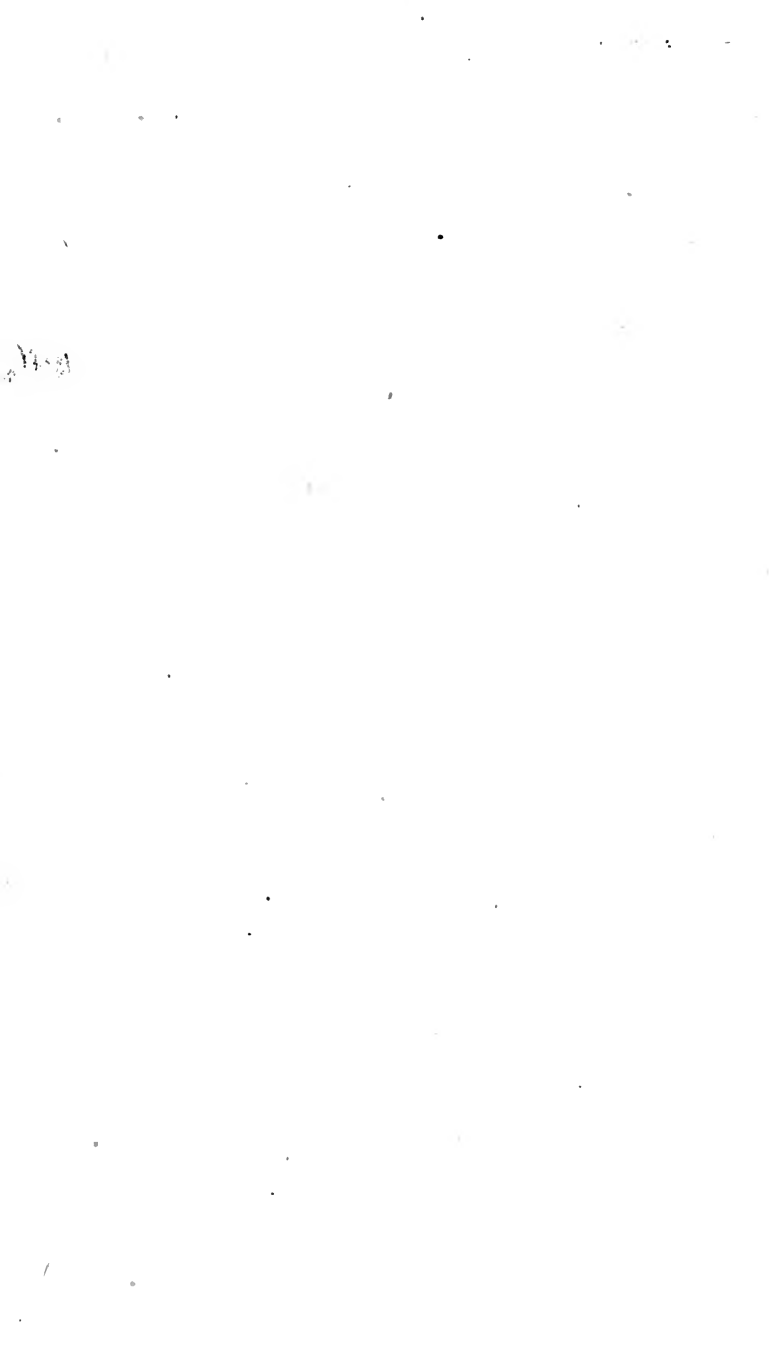
*Exit PEDLER.*

I think I'd better see how I stand on my account. (*Reads.*) Paid for one can cleansing fluid, warranted to spoil anything it touches, three dollars; eleven bottles lemon extract, three dollars and-eighty-five cents; on account piano, five dollars; subscription to magazine, three dollars; one bushel rotten apples, two dollars; glasses, four dollars and

fifty cents; soap, one dollar; tickets, two dollars; on account Shakespeare's works, two dollars; turkey supper, two dollars; medicine, two dollars; on account chair, four dollars; paper and pencils, fifty cents; Armenian, fifteen cents; total, thirty-five dollars. Balance due on piano, seven hundred and ninety-five dollars; on chair, twenty-one dollars; on books, thirty-three dollars; total, eight hundred and forty-nine dollars. I have spent my week's allowance of thirty-five dollars and am eight hundred and forty-nine dollars in debt, all in one day! What will Jack say? There, he's ringing the bell now, and no supper ready, and such a looking house! I'm afraid he won't be a convert to the allowance plan. I don't know whether to let him in or run and hide.

*Bell*

CURTAIN.



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